



The International Journal on Music & Dance

# Gunagrāhi

गुणग्राहि

69



DANCERS AT "RASA SANJE"



THE QUEEN RESTS

Dr. K. Venkatalakshamma  
(1906 - 2002)





S.K. Lakshminarayana (Babu)

## GUNAGRAHI INDIA

The Cultural People

A look at the cultural scene in India. An Ustad or Pandit gives a concert and the hall is half empty. The programme is a wash out! A large number goes to a well-advertised show.

Talented artistes find no avenue to the top. Favoritism, mismanagement and red tape often stifle or shroud brilliance. Artistes piled with paper work, cultural shows earn a dim reputation. There is a talk of difficulties in getting grants, an insecure feeling amongst artistes, vexing paper work even to get menage pensions, for artistes' ignorance and bad public relations are evident, talented artistes are not promoted at the right place at the right time.

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### CONTACT:

#### GUNAGRAHI INDIA

"Munikoti", No.8, Second Cross, Opp. Srinivasa Mandira, Balepet,  
BANGALORE-560053 - Ph: 91-080-2253975,  
e-mail: drsuryaprasad@joyanail.com and gunagrahi@yahoo.com

*With best wishes:*

**T.D. Rajendra and Nirupama Rajendra**

(Dancers-choreographers and teachers)

**ABHINAVA ARTS CENTRE (R)**

A training and performing centre for Kathak and Bharatanatyam  
No.66, Jain Temple street, V.V. Puram, Bangalore-560 004.

Fax/Tel: 6614199, 66134407, 626072.

**Editor General**

**Karnataka Kala Sri**

**Dr.M. Surya Prasad**

**Phone : 2253975**

**Associate Editors :** Usha Kamath Ph: 5598885  
K Ramamurthy Rao Mysore  
Ph: 0821 481899  
B.L. Marula Ph: 5519227  
**Printer** Belavisthina Ph: 6679333  
**Chief Patrons** S.K. Lakshminarayana (Babu)  
Mysore Ph: 0821-513414  
V. Krishnan Ph: 3345665  
Dr. A.H. Ramana, Ph: 6691175  
M. Bhargava Ph: 08182-22051  
H.K. Ganesh Ph: 645749  
H. Karanath, Ph: 6612844  
M.V. Ramachandrasa Ph: 2675131

**Principal Advisers** B.V.K. Sastry Ph: 3326782  
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Dr. R. Sathyanarayana Mysore  
0821 667991  
T.S. Parthasarathy Chennai  
044 459905  
Parvati Girishada Ganga Ph: 686171  
Gita Datta Ph: 171 226181  
Malha Krishna murthy Ph: 044-4444  
Prof. M.S. Narayana Rao  
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**Admn.Executive** Dr. H.N. Srinivasakrishna  
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K. Balasubramanyam Chennai  
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P. Venayaka Tanna, Ph: 3365701  
Dr. Vasandha Doneswamy, Mysore,  
Ph: 0821-512814,  
Ranjana Ganeshan Ph: 6615127  
**Legal Adviser** C.S. Naresh - 9845114867

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**Correspondents: INLAND : Bangalore -**  
N. Ananthapadmanabharao, Ph. 5532658,  
Kusuma Rao, Ph: 3222593  
Katie Sathyanarayana Rao, Ph: 3604663  
**Mysore - K.Raghavendra Rao,**  
Ph: 0821 513517  
Dr. V. Nagaraj, Ph: 0821-511133  
**Mumbai-B. Nagabhushan, Ph: 0251-472475**  
**FOREIGN : California : Malathi Iyengar**  
Ph: 818 788 6860.  
Nacheketa Sharma - Ph: 001-650-960-6906  
Lavanya Dinesh Ph: 717-576-8295

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**EDITORIAL OFFICE:**

**"MUNIKOTI", NO. 8, SECOND CROSS  
OPP. SRINIVASA MANOIRAM, SALEPET  
BANGALORE - 560 053.  
PH : 0 80- 22 5 3975**

e-mail: gunagrahi@yahoo.com, dsuryaprasad@jaymail.com

*Articles Photos Video and reports must be sent to the following address.*

**Editor General, 446, Jagannathalli P.O,  
J.P. Nagar, Kanakapura Main Road,  
BANGALORE - 560 078,**

***A Tribute*****The Queen of Abhinaya  
Dr.K.Venkatalakshamma**

In the sad demise of Padma Bhushana Dr.K.Venkatalakshamma on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, we have lost the last link of a unique dance tradition. She had carved a special niche for herself with her unequalled abhinaya artistry. She would create characters in their vivid forms and traits with her communicative abhinaya. Squatting on the ground she used to emote the characters. Her eyes, the hands, the fingers and the radiant face formed her vocabulary of her dispositions. For her, her Guru Natya Saraswathi Jatti Tayamma was next to God. She underwent rigorous training under Guru Jatti Tayamma and became an artiste-heir of her tradition.

Born on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1906 in Tangali Tandya of Kadur Village, started taking part in dramas right from her age of eight. Venkatalakshamma was brought to Mysore for higher education. Her talents were recognised and Jatti Tayamma trained her in Bharatanatyam. The legendary Asthana Vidwans Chicka Rama Rao and Devendrappa taught her music. She also became proficient in Sanskrit. She became an expert singer of Ranga Geethas (stage music). The prima donna of dance practiced dance for 22 years. She performed her Ranga pravesha at the age of 12. She served the then rulers of Mysore—Nalwady Krishnaraja Wodeyar and Jayachamaraja Wodeyar—as the Asthana Vidushi for more than four decades.

She founded her own institution 'Bharatha Kala Niketana' in 1954 and imparted training in dance to innumerable Indian and foreign aspirants. She rendered priceless service as the member of the Dasara Exhibition Executive Committee, Karnataka Secondary Examination Board, Karnataka Sangeetha Nrithya Academy and others.

**Awards :**

Venkatalakshamma was honoured with many awards and titles. Among them Karnataka Sangeetha Nrithya Academy Award, Best Artiste award in Dasara festivities, Gold Medal during the Ganeshotsava at Kadur, President's Award from Dr.S.Radha-krishnan in 1964, Honorary Doctorate from the University of Mysore, 'Sangeetha Kalarathna' from the Bangalore Gayana Samaja by presiding over the 31<sup>st</sup> music conference of the Samaja deserve a special mention.

She was conferred the most prestigious 'Padma Bhushana' in 1992, Rajyotsava award in 1988, Natya Rani Shanthala Award in 1995, 'Nadoja' award from Hampi Kannada University in 2001 are some of the very important awards won by her.

The demonstration of abhinaya during the music conferences of the Karnataka Gana Kala Parishath and Bangalore Gayana Samaja as also the one held during the Nrithya Nrithya annual dance conference of Nupura have left behind indelible and thrilling memories in the minds of the rasikas.

She had decided to spend the evening of her life in her native village Tandya Tangali and accordingly lived there before the cruel hand of the death snatched her away from us.

**May her soul rest in peace.**



## Serious pursuit of the classical music

To the aspirants of classical music today numerous avenues of learning lie wide open. One can go to one of the many academies, Vihars and Vidyalyayas, or learn in the precincts of a University. A student can also learn in an individual capacity from an exponent of his choice. Roughly speaking the last arrangement is called the Gurukula system or the unwaveringly talked about 'Guru-Shishya parampara' while the earlier ones are clubbed together under the 'Institutionalised teaching'.

The mode and manner of teaching music as also the objective of the learner in the two cases are widely different from each other. While in the latter case, one is generally a whole-time student of music, with a serious goal or intent and tied to the apron-strings of one and the same teacher with whom he spends the greater part of his time, learning, listening or in 'sangeet charcha', in the Institutionalised system of learning, a student has much narrower, more often a mercenary aim—the lure of a degree and the prospect of a subsequent job. However exceptions do exist in both the systems. But there is a general tendency to extol the one and disparage the other. It is possible that the rights of both, those that run the musical institutions and the intelligentsia with high hopes from them, are wrongly adjusted. In these days of ample and easy exposure and communication, the musicians heard in concerts and conferences become the natural yardstick to measure all other musical attempts with. The result is disillusionment. Because each of the two systems of imparting musical instruction has its own peculiarities as well as limitations. Besides other things, much depends on a student's aptitude, level of intelligence, grasp and involvement. These attributes can be transferred with ease to the teachers of music as well.

One has possibly heard all that could be said for or against the Institutionalised and the Gurukula mode of teaching and learning of music. One can trace the historical evolution of the Institutionalised teaching and the Manda Bose in Baroda, Surendra Mohan in Calcutta and Vishnu Digambar Paluskar in Maharashtra made the earliest attempts to establish musical institutions. The last named founded the Gandharva Mahavidyalaya at Lahore (now in Pakistan) in 1901. For years, his institution had both types of students. The selected and talented few who remained with their Guru all the time and received training in the Gurukula way as well as those who attended the limited time classes and went away. Thus in those early days of the Institutionalised system, a talented student with potentialities was never hampered in his exclusive and serious pursuit of the classical music. Whether it was in a Vidyalyaya or a Gurukula a student learnt his music and it was ultimately his involvement (what is missing nowadays) which made him acquire and achieve.

—Karnataka Kala Sri Dr. M. Surya Prasad

## VEENA MAESTRO S.BALACHANDER'S 'TYPICAL' VIEWS ON PALLAVI

The various 'PALLAVIS' sung by 'Mubaa' Vaidhyanatha Iyer are truly baffling beyond belief! How really wonderful! How really stupendous and stupefying! How really magnificently marvellous! .. (Details about some of the pallavis) How sad is the level of Pallavi-singing these days! For this deplorable condition prevailing today, I totally and unreservedly blame only most of those prominent musicians of "YESTERDAY". Except for 'Mudikondan' Venkatrama Iyer, G.N.B., Alathur Brothers and a very few more, the majority of the others took no care, interest or efforts in learning, striving and maintaining the proper 'Laya-personified' and 'Thaalam-interwoven' intelligent...intricate...involving, intellectual...inspiring and inimitable PALLAVI-singing. They thought it wise not to take any risk! They were just satisfied traversing the "safe-sure-successful" path. "Success" mainly depended in not achieving the 'impossible', but only in as much maintaining all that was 'possible'. That is why we had (and suffered from) a surfeit of "Aadhi-thaalam Mukkal-eduppu PARIMALA RANGAPATHAY"... & "Aadhi-thaalam Sundu Viral Sama-eduppu THILLAI EESANAI" PALLAVIS!

How so pathetically easy! How so shamefully simple and elementary! WHO CARES!?! One just made "mountains out of mole-hills" with no substance but with lots of Pretence! Effortless Success was assured! And the fame won was Safeguarded! Just imagine as to what would have tragically happened if the same, very same (course of utter safety) was also adopted by those of the still previous eras...like 'Mubaa' Vaidhyanatha Iyer himself for instance, or 'Poochi' Srinivasa Iyengar or 'Nannakkal' Narasimha Iyengar, or...(the list seems endless). Most of those of "YESTERDAY" who, day in and day out...year in and year out, spoke volumes about the musical-glories of the past, of their Masters, of their Paramparas, of their ancient styles and hereditary assets, never exerted even their little-finger in the aspect of "PALLAVI singing".

I can excuse their incompetence in this regard if need be. But, I have never tolerated and never forgive them for their wanton (and highly motivated) insolence in heartlessly discouraging even those few other (not yet prominent and not so successful) musicians, who, fervently wishing to preserve the 'sathya'-laya-oriented style of singing PALLAVIS as done in the good old days, were genuinely spending hours and hours in fruitful - truthful study, research, practice and pursuit. These sincere buy not so popular musicians were told and advised that such 'intricate' & 'involved' Pallavi singing was out-moded and out-dated and out of style and out of the reach of listeners!

THOSE VERY SAME VIDWANS who time and again insisted that They were preserving ALL THE ANCIENT, TRADITIONAL, HEREDITARY AND SAMPRADAYA-BOUND "MUSICAL HERITAGE". If only they had the open goodness to admit that certain of these ancient Pallavis were only out of - THEIR - reach and far - from - THEIR - grasp and if only they had had the graciousness to faithfully encourage those others who were attempting laya-oriented truly 'Sampradaya - PALLAVIS', then, today this sorry state of affairs could have been totally avoided. Even maintaining a rhythmic-tempo of "Sarvalaghu-suddham" had to be considered as a great formidable (and at times 'unsurmountable') task by certain Vidwans of yesterday. And thanks to them, as already quoted, the present 'upto-date' Pallavi-singing brought into popular vogue by them is nothing different from a most-simple and most-elementary and most-bland "Arai-eduppu" Pallavi as in the first line of the song "Brovabharana". Or, even that of a

(Continued on page 14)



Dr.A.H.Rama Rao &amp; Sudha Rao page

## Commendable Mythili

Mythili, trained by Guru Sadhya Keshava Rao was in her elements during her Bharatanatya recital at Nayana. Blessed with an useful body profile, Mythili earned the commendations of the rasikas. In the ragamalika Shabda, she portrayed the Goddess Parvathi thinking of Her Lord Shiva. While doing so the traits of Shiva were sketched by Mythili in a highly communicative manner. She had chosen Poorvi Kalyani varna 'Swamiye varacholladi sakhiye'. The Virahotkhanthita nayika yearns for her Lord Shanmukha. The adjoining nritya and nritya were dealt with poise and perfection. The jatis were beautifully couched in captivating adavus. Mythili's abhinaya expertise came to the fore in the delineation of a Purandaradasa pada 'Elliruvane Ranga'.

She received commendable support from her Guru Sandhya Keshava Rao (nattuvanga), Ramesh Chadaga (vocal), Janardhana Rao (mridanga) and Mdhusudhan (violin).

### Skilful Susheela Mehta

Imagine the delight of the spectators witnessing a highly skilled batsman celebrating his comeback with a century! I had the same experience when I saw talented and skilful dancer Susheela Mehta making a comeback

through her Bharatanatya recital at the Yavanika recently. One was amazed at her clean lines, accurate tatumettus, fluid limb movements and some fine charis. Susheela has an added advantage of being an expert in Hindusthani music. Knowledge of music goes a long way in the exactitude of the dance. She gave an artistic and aesthetic exposition of 'Sindhuraratna vighrahantrina manam', the dhyana shloka of Lalitha Sahasranama and portrayed Seetha as a righteous mother, Amrapali dedicating herself to the art of dance and Meera's unstinted love and devotion to Lord Krishna. Her three-part portrayal was marked by meaningful hasta vinyasas complemented enchanting sthanakas. Susheela excelled in the technical aspect of the Bharatanatya too as was evident from her nritya and teermanas. Her dedication and devotion to Bharatanatya was unquestionable. It was rewarding too.

Susheela's dance got a big boost from Minnal Prabhu's taut nattuvanga and Neela Ramanujam's melodious and vivacious singing.

### Artistic Ramamani

A rich voice, well-cultivated and capable of producing the subtlest of the nuances greeted the audience at the Fort High School compound that heard seasoned singer R.A. Ramamani's vocal recital held under the auspices of Sri Rama Seva Mandali. Though technical details and artistic maneuvers were

available in abundance, they did not offend the aesthetic sensibilities of the listeners. Her grip over the classical idiom and the laya was commendable. Her exposition of Ravichandrike raga for Thyagaraja's 'Maakelara vicharamu' sung with laya-perfect kalpanaswaras impressed. The swaras came off well conceived and the effect was enjoyable. Shuddha Secmanthini, a derivative of Hanuma Todi Melakartha raga, is seldom taken up for elaboration on the concert platform. It has to be handled with care. Ramamani exhibited all her prowess in sketching it. The krithi 'Janaki Ramana' was prettified with numerous sangathees. She revealed good vocal power and classical approach. She revelled in the delineation Mohana ('Evarura ninnu vina'), Nayaki ('Ranganayaki') and Yagapriya ('Rama Rama'). The modes came refreshingly alive with innumerable flourishes that enhanced the quality of the recital. The phrasing and pacing were admirable and the whole exercise turned out to be an extremely worthy one. She received a fine musical impetus from Nalina Mohan (violin), M.T.Rajakesari (mridanga) and Guruprasanna (khanjira).

### Sanjay Subramanyam satisfies

Sanjay Subramanyam though satisfied his audience with his skilful music, a serious rasika missed the depth and profundity of classical music to a certain extent. This is not to underrate his capacity and craft. One has heard him at his peak earlier on a couple of occasions. The stress and strain might have taken its toll. Nevertheless, his several ingenious creations

both in ragaalapana and swarakalapana were classy. His robust voice came in handy to execute hairpin bends and bravura passages in Kedara and Reetigowla. The raga and swaravistasaras were a sheer delight. His involvement with his singing was complete. One noticed an artistic methodology.

Sanjay's mettle came to the fore in the elaboration of Todi (Kartikeya) and raga, tana and pallavi. His tonal modulations reminiscent of past-masters including MDR. The only snag was that he occasionally strayed away from the mike and some of the passages faded out. Dr.Manjunath (violin), Palghat Raghu (mridanga) and M.A. Krishnamurthy (ghata) provided matching accompaniments.

### Mandolin wizard

As usual, the mandolin wizard U.Srinivas' instrumental duet with his brother U. Rajesh was noteworthy for the instrumental sheen and the high degree of professionalism. The instrumental inflections were very few and far between and the strings released enhanced the pleasure. His long strokes in one pluck, the multi-octave journey, finest confluence of melody and mathematics and so on vouched for his prodigious talent and brilliance. He gave a scintillating exposition of Kalyani for Shyama Sastry's 'Birana varalichehi'. The classical verve and vigour that encompassed Salaga Bhairavi (Thyagaraja's 'Elaavatana') and Todi ragas was spellbinding. I was swayed by his rendition of Todi. After the shared alapana



Srinivas and Rajesh presented Thyagaraja's 'Jesinadella marachitivimo'. The detailed treatment had the young mandolinists surveying the raga from each and every corner. It glowed as much in the mandra and madhya sthayi as in the tara and ati tara sthayis. The presentation became a memorable one with the ragamalika swaras comprising Bilahari, Kalyana Vasantha, Kadanakutoohala and Shivaranjini had a singular charm with melkala sanchaaras. However, on a couple of occasions, the playing together of the two or more strings yielded mixed results. Rajesh also exhibited his mastery over the medium and the mode. It was good to note that he is treading the same path of his elder brother both in terms of art and technique of mandolin play. Mysore V.Srikanth (violin) rose to the occasion with his befitting repartees full of artistry and technique. Vellore Ramabhadran (mridanga) was a picture of composure, laya compactness and refinement. Karthik (ghata) imparted meaningful support.

### **Vishweshwaran delights**

Prof. R. Vishweshwaran of Mysore is an expert veena player and composer. He is a good vocalist too. His veena recital at the same venue was a sheer delight. What a tone, range and melody it was! While it was truly traditional, there were phrasings that uncovered his musical imagination. The delineations were sophisticated too. He began with a Kannada devaranama in Kamavardhini raga. His Harikambhoji, Dhenuka and Anandabhairavi served as strong musical appetisers. The rasikas had well settled down for the ensuing musical feast. The veena

vidwan never disappointed. His Mohana and Natha Bhairavi followed by Khamach, Bindumalini and tillana in Marwa all reached the rasikas in their vibrant forms. Neat and bright phrasings were laced aesthetically giving a fulsomeness to the renditions. Immaculate in the shruti and laya Vishweshwaran was absolutely at ease weaving pattern after pattern in scintillating sanchaaras.

### **Hyderabad brothers evoke mixed reactions**

The SVN Music Academy held an interesting weeklong 'Great Composers Music Festival' at SSMRV College auditorium, J.P. Nagar featuring exclusively compositions of different composers each day. The festival began with a vocal duet by Hyderabad Brothers—D. Seshachari and D. Raghavachari. Their concert was dedicated to the compositions of Thyagaraja. As usual Seshachari took the lead. Their referring of the text on stage also evoked mixed reactions.

Artistically and appropriately accompanied by Dwaram Sathyanarayana Rao, A. Kumar and Bangalore K. Venkataram on violin, mridanga and ghata respectively, the vocalists swung into action with a charming Sowrashtira composition 'Sri Ganapthini'. Though their voice seemed to lack in full power their skill was quite sure and assertive. Raghavachari discharged a limited role and Seshachari who anchored the show seemed to have voice problems in

the higher registers. This was evident in the ensuing Athana krithi 'Halo pranathaarti'. The raga brilliance of the artistes came to the fore in the delineation of Bahudari raga. There was no extraordinary allure in the technique of building of the raga. Every now and then Seshachary would come up with a dazzling phrase. Thyagaraja's popular krithi 'Brova hhaarama' was rendered with lot of enthusiasm. It was ornamented by kalpana swaras. One welcomed the elaboration of Devagandhari raga. Though the show was not particularly compelling, the ragaswaroopu progressed pleasantly. The vocalists' expressiveness was too even. A rarely heard krithi addressed to Goddess Tulasi 'Sri Tulasamma' was sung with poise. Next, Shuddha Dhanyasi was rendered with alert imagination. It was both entertaining and pleasant. Another famous krithi 'Enta nerchina' was sung in detail adorned with swaras.

### Brilliant Anuradha

Seasoned and brilliant veena player Anuradha Madhusudhan dazzled in her veena recital at her concert held under the auspices of Sri Rama Seva Mandali, Govt. Fort High School compound. Ably supported by C. Cheluvvaraju (mridanga) and Sukanya Rangopal (ghata), she began her recital with the crisp Darbar varna. Though aided by a contact-mike, Anuradha never sounded shrill or hard. She cleverly combined Karnataka aesthetics with artistry. Happily she did not surrender herself to the instrumental gimmickry and the music flowed vibrantly. She poured her heart and soul in the presentation of Mysore Vasudevacharya's ever

popular krithi 'Broche varevarura' in Khamuch raga and Anandabhairavi raga for 'Marivere'. Keeping in tact the instrumental sheen she extended the beauty of the raga in all the manodharma-exercises. A crisp 'Bhagayanayya' (Chandrayothi) added to the listening experience. Anuradha was a class by herself in the raga vista of Lathangi. The veena artiste was at home in taking care of the subtle aspects of the mode and one could enjoy the wholesome formation of the raga. The tanamalika added variety to her presentation. Neraval and swaraprastara beautified 'Aparadhamula'.

### Beautiful Aishwarya

Blessed with beautiful looks young and petite Aishwarya Nityananda charmed the audience at Ravindra Kalakshetra with her technically perfect, artistically beautiful and aesthetically appealing Bharatanaty. She is the proud disciple of a versatile and famous Guru Radha Sridhar of Sri Venkatesha Natya Mandira.

Aishwarya's angikas and anga shuddhi were commendable. It was evident in the initial todayam and Pushpanjali followed by Ganesha stuti. She rendered the Malaya marutha jatiswara with confidence. The churis were a delight indeed. The manner in which she negotiated the complex jathis drew a special word of praise. She went on to portray the traits of Lord Shiva on the basis of a Pharaz krithi. In this, she portrayed the navarasas with relish. The dancer's abilities were fully on view in the detailed

treatment of Todi varna 'Roopamu joochi'. The virahothkhanthita nayika came alive in her disposition. The varied adavus saddled on to the nritta were not only eye catching but technically demanding too. The mandi adavus and charis in particular brought out the excellence of Aishwarya's talents. Praveenkumar's nattuvanga and P.Rama's vocal refrain enhanced the impact of the dance recital.

### **Cofindent Prakrithi**

Yet another proof of the greatness as a teacher of Guru Narmada was available when Prakrithi Hosakere presented a neat and tidy Bharatanatyam recital at Ravindra Kalakshetra. She had the confidence and conviction of a finished-dancer. Her sthanakas and hastha viniyogas were appropriate. Though she needs to perfect her facials, she was at home in the rhythmic aspect. Right from the tender expression of devotion and love for Lord Shiva and the Pushpanjali and alarippu (Mohana, trishra triputa) one saw her rare gift for mime. The ragamalika jatiswara brought out her mastery over laya. The varied intricate jatis that comprised the number were dealt with accuracy. It was in the varna that her talent blossomed to the full. TVG's attractive varna in Nattakuranji raga is addressed to the Lord Ganesha. The various deeds of Ganesha were portrayed in the sancharees. The nritta part of the varna was no less effective with a well articulated ardha mandali, stances and the dignified stretches of the limbs. The karvais were commendable. The childhood pranks were shown on the basis of a Purandaradasa pada 'Gummana Kareyadire'

(Tillang). A poem drawn from Mysore Mallige of the love-poet K.S.Narasimha swamy was an interesting selection and execution indeed. She concluded with a Maharajapuram Santhan-tillana set to Revathi raga.

Guru Narmada lent an inspiring nattuvanga support. Manasi Prasad's entry into the field of dance-music was greeted wholeheartedly and she proved her mettle in the most positive direction. J.K.Sridhar (violin), Janardhana (mridanga), Chitra Lingam (veena) and Prasanna Kumar (morsing, khanjira) enriched the dance with their useful contributions.

### **Fruitful Rasa Sanje**

'Rasa Sanje', a three-day festival of dance was held under the aegis of Sri Venkatesha Natya Mandira led by veteran dance-Guru Radha Sridhar at ADA Rangamandira and Ravindra Kalakshetra. The programmes on each evening began with a group performance by the senior students of the Mandira. It was noteworthy that all the students gave a creditable account of themselves and did proud to their Guru. The inaugural dance performance featuring Srimathi Anilkumar, Gayithri and Deepa Srinath augured well for the ensuing festival. The Goddess of Learning Saraswathi was saluted on the basis of a Kanakadasa pada 'Nammamma Sharade' set to Hamsadhvani raga. The dancers in a communicative abhinaya portrayed the traits of the Goddess. Swaras in different patterns formed the base

for the nritta. A description of Lord Nataraja (a Tamil pada 'Aade namma', Pharaz raga) was marked by the portrayal of Navarasas. In a well-coordinated design and demonstration the concluding tillana by Dr.M.Balamurugikrishna set to Kadanakutoohala raga became vibrant and vivacious. P.Rama's singing was of high class. Young mridangist B.C.Manjunath surprised us with his taut and skillful nattuvanga. J.K.Sridhar (violin), Jayaram (flute), Janardhana Rao (mridanga) and Prasannakumar (morsing and other effects) were the other members of the orchestra who contributed to the success of the dance recital.

#### Talented Indrani Parthasarathy

In her solo performance, Indrani Parthasarathy, daughter-disciple of Guru Radha Sridhar exhibited her talent as a Bhramarinatya and Kuchipudi natya dancer in an innocuous manner. She presented Shivashtaka, an eulogy to Lord Shiva, in the medium of Kuchipudi natya. Though one missed the vachikaabhinaya, there was ample grace in her dance. The fast paced nritta vouched for Indrani's rhythmic expertise. A varna in Valachi raga by Subbudi revolving around a nayika yearning for union with Shammukha. The nayika shares her feelings and experience with her sakhi. Indrani's enactment relived the above situation. The nayika also tells her sakhi that she would teach a lesson to the nayaka after his arrival ('Varattum varattum'). A Bhadrachala Ramadas' krithi 'Nannu brovamani cheppave' (Kalyani) was enacted underlining the greatness of Sri Rama.

Sridhar's scintillate

A flourishing dancer-couple Sridhar and Anuradha Sridhar rose to the occasion in

unfolding the story of Girija Kalyana (marriage of Girija with Shiva) on the basis of a Sanskrit classic Kumara Sambhavam by the ace poet Kalidasa. Parvathi, the daughter of Himavantha and Menadevi is enamoured by Lord Shiva. This mythological story was elaborated upon by the Sridhars. Aided by a magnificent musical support lent by Srishtika (vocal), Prasannakumar (brilliant nattuvanga and other effects), Ganesh Kumar (violin), Jayaram (flute) and Narayanaswamy (a vibrant mridanga), they won half the battle. The constant manipulation of body weight, so that the shifting emphasis on syllables created a variety of rhythmic cadences and metres. It was an aesthetic and artistic journey the dancers embarked on. There was variety in adavus, greeva and nayana bedhas marked by excellent charis, mandalas and sthanakas. Sridhars demonstrated classical discipline and total dedication in their dance. The eka-aharya presentation clicked due to the quicksilver changes in their roles and Carnatic ragas adapted to the dance feature. The ragas like Nata, Kamavardhini, Vasantha, Kalyani, Shuddha Saveri, Mohana and others evoked the right mood. The usage of swaras, jathas, gati bedhas, teermana adavus and tana here and there enhanced the impact of the dance feature. However, one felt the need for cutting down its melo-dramatic content.

#### Group dance

The curtain of the second evening's programmes raised with a group dance by Ardhya, Jasraj, Rasema, Jyengar, Ranjini, Sowmya and Aishwarya Nubhyananda. The young dancers endeared themselves to the rasikas with their tidy presentation of a

charushra alarippu juxtaposed with Mahishasura mardini stotra. Guru Radha Sridhar's excellence in choreography was conspicuous at all stages. The dancers froze artistically to portray the various forms of the Devi. They paid obeisance to Lord Sri Rama on the lyrical support drawn from 'Jaya Jaya Janaki ramana'. There was a singular charm in the nritta marked by attractive rechikas in the rendition of the concluding Hindola tillana.

### **Fascinating group choreography**

It was a fascinating and facile group choreography that made the naktikas glued to their seats when the students of Guru B.Bhanumathi performed under the banner of Bharathanjali. Bhanumathi is well known for her group choreography. But this time it was done in the format of a Bharatanatyam recital featuring traditional items.

Sheela Chandrasekhar, Deepika, Geetha Narayanaswamy, Nagabrinda, Anupama Srikanth, Sneha Srinivas, Josephine Savitha and Chithra Thyagarajan were in their elements covering each every part of the stage and appearing and disappearing from the stage quite often. Precision seemed to be the key word. The rhapsody of the dance form was exquisitely conveyed to the audience. The intelligently woven rhythmic syllables were aptly given expression in the dancers' footwork and limb movements. The programme began with a Subramanya kauthavam followed by a trishra alarippu. 'Ananda nartana Ganapathim bhavaye' brought to the fore the close relationship between dance and sculpture. The last freeze depicting Ganesha moving on his mount, rat, enthralled the viewers.

The arudis or rhythmic flourishes in the Harikambhoji jatiswara had all sense of timing. Several attributes of Lord Shiva were sketched in a highly articulate abhinaya as expounded in the popular 'Mahadeva Shiva Shambho' (Revathi) krithi. 'Narayana Hari Govinda' (Purandaradasa) was used to highlight the greatness of Hari. The Valachi tillana by Dwaraki Krishnaswamy provided the artistic finale to the group performance. However, one felt that one or two solo items could have provided an enjoyable contrast. B.Chandrasekhar's introductions were apt.

### **Elegant Sowndarya**

Sowndarya Srivatsa had a neat outline in the araimandali (though on a couple of occasions it missed its line) and elegantly finished leg stretches with beautifully etched diagonal incline of the body and light footed jumps. In the intricacies of rhythm too her dance revealed adequacy. With enriching accompaniments provided by Guru Narmada (nattuvangu), Ramesh Chadaga (vocal), Madhusudan (violin) and Janardhana Rao (mridanga), Sowndarya rendered Pushpanjali composed by Saroja Natarajan. She evoked the blessings of Lord Ganesha through 'Vandisuvudadiyali' (Purandaradasa). The dancer was at ease in nritta, nrithya and abhinaya parts of the Papanasham Shivan's varna 'Nee inda mayam' in Dhanyasi raga. The virahothkhanthita nayika came alive in her abhinaya. She did well in the delineation of a khanditha nayika on the basis of a Javali 'Saako ninna sneha'. She concluded with a Ratipatipriya tillana by TVG. □

(Continued from page 6)

"samu-eduppu" Pallavi as in the first line of the song "Daarini Telusukunti"!!!! One should truly be ashamed to call them (under the grossly misused title of) PALLAVI singing. Before being conferred the Title of "Mahaa", Sri Vaidhyanatha Sivan, on that occasion, chose to sing the raagam, "CHAKRAVAAKAM". The mere rendering of the raaga-aalaapana itself made the entire Sadas start wondering as to "What" Ragam it was! They had never heard it before! They could not 'identify' it! ... (stuff deleted) This incident happened more than one hundred years ago. And...even TODAY...inspite of the passing of years, ragas like even Vikulaabharamam, Kokilapriya, Hemavathi, Bhavapriya, Gamanasrama, Dharmavathi, Natabhairavi, Shadvidhanaargini, Srasangi etc, etc, are YET TO BE MADE POPULAR AND EASILY IDENTIFIABLE BY WE MUSICIANS, TO THE AUDIENCE AT LARGE!!! (Leave alone ragas like Naaganandini, Navaneetam, Manavathi, Dhanuvardhini, Roopavathi, Jankaradhvani, Raghupriya, Kosalam, Soolini, Chitrambhani, Kantaamani, Saralagam, Nausika Bhooshani, etc etc etc) Again, who is to be blamed for this sorry state of affairs? I personally can and shall blame only those who, all these years kept on singing REPEATEDLY (as per their self-imposed SAFE MEASURE) ragas like Kalyani, Kambhoji, Sankarabharanam, Bhairavi, Thodi, Keeravani, Karaharapriya, Shanmughapriya...and I am afraid the list ends here.

(COURTESY: RAVIESH, TORONTO ON)

## THANK YOU !

In response to our request we have received 92 letters from our esteemed readers and well wishers within and outside Karnataka lending invaluable suggestions regarding the celebrations of 5th Varshikotsava of GUNAGRAHI. We thank them for their loving response.

As per the majority opinion it is decided to hold the 5th Varshikotsava of GUNAGRAHI at Bangalore in the month of September 2002 with a symposium and music and dance programmes.

The details are being worked out and will be announced in the issue of August 2002.

We solicit co-operation and active participation of all the lovers of music and dance in all the endeavours of GUNAGRAHI. Please write to us for anything pertaining to classical music and dance.

---Editor General

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